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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 003165

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: UPDATE ON CZECH REPORT OF ATTACK ON DIPLOMATIC CONVOY

REF: PRAGUE 1106

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission David M. Satterfield for reasons

1.4 (a), (b) and (d)

11. (C) Embassy, working with MNF-I and 3rd Infantry Division, has still been unable to ascertain whether any U.S. or Coalition Forces witnessed or were aware of the incident reported by the Czech government, reftel. MNF-I at the level of Deputy Chief of Staff for Political, Military, and Economic Affairs, has made every possible effort to determine what took place, but no new facts have come to light. No report of any such incident was filed by U.S. forces and efforts to poll soldiers in the field at that time and place have proved negative. In the event more details of the incident become available, Embassy will advise.

12. (C) Embassy Prague and Washington may wish to explain to the Czechs that rules of engagement for U.S. convoys, set forth in Convoy Security Force Protection Measures, state that "Convoy commanders are responsible for the self-protection capability within their convoy." Accordingly, even if a U.S. convoy was aware of the attack, with no prior communication or coordination with the Czechs, the convoy commander would have no way to positively identify the status of the vehicles trailing the convoy. Without such positive identification of either the trailing vehicles or the source of an attack, the convoy would be in no position to take action under the standing rules of engagement. In addition, if the mission of the convoy was, for example, to transport VIPs, the convoy commander would potentially be endangering the successful completion of his own mission by stopping to engage in a firefight -- without knowing who he was defending or who he was fighting -- that would expose his passengers to harm.

13. (C) Embassy Prague and Washington officials should not hesitate to invite Czech diplomats in Baghdad to call on Embassy so that we can discuss with them ways to enhance cooperation and coordination in order to avoid such incidents in the future. Moreover, Embassy plans to host a meeting this week with all Embassies in Baghdad (with whom the U.S. has diplomatic relations) to discuss security procedures and strategies. We would welcome the Czechs and be more than willing to discuss this incident further with them at that time.

Khalilzad